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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/425ABS IZMIR TU//CC// IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 004084

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/12/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [ENRG](#) [ETRD](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: SOME FUEL TRUCKS MOVING AGAIN FROM TURKEY TO IRAQ

REF: ANKARA 4000

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor Carl Siebentritt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: We understand from U.S. military channels that, as of late in the day July 12, fuel tankers are once again moving from Turkey into Iraq over the Habur Gate. Also on July 12, Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade (UFT) Director General of Agreements Sevet Ilgac explained to us the current situation at Habur and assured us the GOT is working hard to restart the flow of fuel tankers to Iraq. He noted, however, that even though the UFT had ordered Customs to once again process fuel trucks, some drivers were refusing to go through Customs for fear of being caught for siphoning off part of their loads for sale on the black market. Ilgac emphasized that Customs authorities would not allow these drivers to cross the border but are ready and willing to expedite sustainment tankers with full legal loads. End Summary.

2. (SBU) U.S. military at the Turkey-Iraq border informed us late on July 12 that fuel trucks are finally moving once again over the Habur Gate from Turkey into Iraq (reftel). We are still working to ascertain how many of these trucks are carrying coalition sustainment fuel versus humanitarian (SOMO) fuel for the Iraqi people.

3. (C) Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade (UFT) Director General of Agreements Sevet Ilgac told us July 12 that there are around 1,000 tankers parked near the gate waiting to go to Iraq and approximately twenty percent of these trucks are carrying Coalition sustainment fuel. He assured us that Turkish authorities had ordered Customs officials at Habur on July 10 to allow 350 fuel tankers per day to cross the border; of these 80 tankers would be sustainment, the rest SOMO. Ilgac emphasized that four lanes had been designated specifically for sustainment tankers and a fifth lane could be opened if needed.

4. (C) Unfortunately, Ilgac told us, corruption is a large problem at the border crossing and many drivers sell off part of their fuel in Turkey and replace the missing fuel with water. He explained that many truck drivers are apparently refusing to approach the Customs area for fear of getting caught participating in this practice. In addition, corrupt drivers may be pressuring honest ones not to approach the

Customs area. (Comment: We understand that there are tighter control on sustainment trucks -- such as Customs seals at the loading point in Turkey and checks in Iraq -- to ensure that drivers carrying these products are not stealing. We suspect most fuel theft is from SOMO trucks. End Comment.) Ilgac emphasized to us that the UFT and Customs authorities would be firm in combating smuggling and said that Customs would not clear tankers with obviously missing product.

15. (C) Ilgac assured us however that Customs authorities are under orders to use all legal means to expedite sustainment fuel tankers through the crossing and that recently loaded tankers should have no problems. He added that authorities should be able to process up to 400 tankers (300 for SOMO and 100 for us) through the gate in a matter of days. He concluded by saying that the onus is on fuel contractors to recognize that fuel diversion will no longer be tolerated and to start sending legal tankers to Customs clearance at Habur.

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